

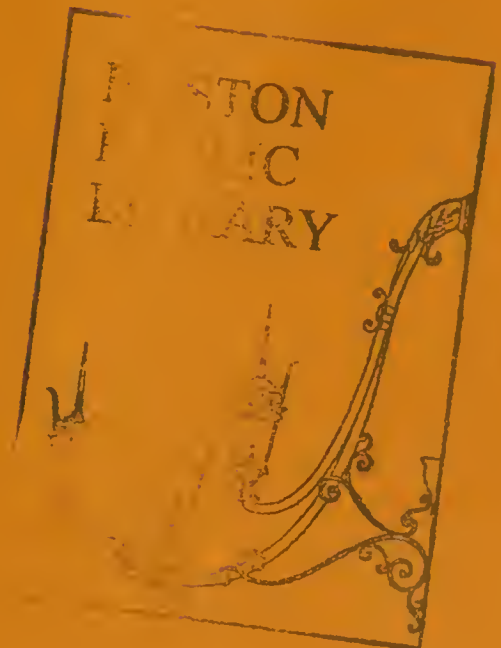
201 000

BRA

911

City of
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Library

Jenny Building
CENTRAL WHARF
etc.



Waterfront
W325

Assessment of the Jenney Building
McKinley Square, Milk and Central Streets

Robert B. Rettig
Project Director, Boston Landmarks Commission

The Jenney Building represents the last surviving section of a major Boston wharf building of the Federal period. Central Wharf, of which the Jenney Building forms the western end, was built in 1816 and originally extended some 1300 feet into Boston Harbor. The New England Aquarium now stands where the other end of the block once stood. Expressway construction and other incompatible developments have eliminated most of Central Wharf; the Jenney Building alone survives, cut off from the waterfront that gave it life.

Like other early nineteenth century wharf buildings, the Jenney Building is composed of a series of attached brick structures, originally used as stores or warehouses. Nine of the original fifty-four units survive, with a gap where one has been removed. The western end of the Jenney Building, facing McKinley Square, was the original end of the Central Wharf block; as such, it is the most important part of the building architecturally and should not be sacrificed even if the other units are allowed to remain. The high hip roof of this western end is a particularly handsome and characteristic feature.

Although there have been changes to the Jenney Building over the years, the original brick fabric survives nearly intact. Most of the upper-story window openings are also original; particularly noteworthy are the squat fourth-story windows, a characteristic of the Federal style. The ground story has suffered the most extensive changes, although on a few of the units, traces survive of the original arrangement of a central door flanked by two smaller openings.

The Waterfront Project has encouraged preservation of a number of historic market and wharf buildings of granite construction--Faneuil Hall Market, the Custom House Block, and the like. The brick Jenney Building represents an earlier period of Boston's waterfront history and an earlier style of architecture, both irreplaceable. Although truncated now, the block is a tangible reminder of the time when the water came as far as McKinley Square. Demolition of the Jenney Building would diminish rather than enhance the connection with the sea that is so important a part of the Waterfront Project.

Traffic considerations are important, but not if they jeopardize buildings as valuable to the city's heritage as the Jenney Building. Two decades ago, the elevated expressway ruthlessly violated a score of historically and architecturally important buildings, causing environmental damage that the Waterfront Project is endeavoring to minimize. Let it not be said that another road eliminated the last major remnant of Federal Boston's brick wharves. The Jenney Building should be saved.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06314 927 0

Waterfront
W325

AUTHOR

Jenney BLD. Central Wharf

TITLE

DATE
LOANED

BORROWER'S NAME

